

they comprehend as yet but a fraction relatively of the whole traffic of trade. Among other items of traffic he states that of building-stone to be not one-tenth of what is requisite for even a fourth part of the surface. "and whereas stone might be brought up to the metropolis at one penny per ton per mile by the London and North-Western and Great Western Railways, little is so brought, though there is a great wish to have public buildings of stone instead of brick."—It is said that the solicitor's bill of the South-Eastern contained 10,000 folios, occupied twelve months in taxation before the master, and amounted to 240,000*l*.—Messrs. Chaloner and Fleming, of Liverpool, in alluding to the difficulties attendant on the transmission of wood goods to the interior by rail or canal, remark that, "with a fostering anxiety to promote the traffic by both rail and canal, such as exists from the east coast to the interior, this port would be enabled to supply an almost inexhaustible traffic by both, and, as regards the produce of America, would be as remarkable for its distribution of wood goods as it is now for cotton. Apply the same skill to the goods traffic that the passenger traffic has had shown to it, and a continued, almost uninterrupted stream, would flow into the manufacturing districts, to be thence distributed over the network of rails that is spreading itself throughout the kingdom."—While two joiners, last week, were at work on the premises of a cabinet-maker at Hull, near the railway station, three bricklayers being at same time on the roof, repairing damage occasioned by fire, a railway tender came right through the walls, and knocked down a stack of chimneys and the east and west walls of four rooms.—It is alleged, in a compensation case lately to be tried at Shipley, that the Leeds and Bradford Railway Company, in seeking a foundation for their line across a certain portion of the Bingley bog, have forced the wet and boggy earth beneath the floor of the claimant's mill, thereby not only throwing it out of level and impairing the foundation, but making the floor so wet and damp that the machinery is injured by rust and mould, and the floor rendered unfit to stand upon, and also that the high embankment raised against the weaving-room window had shut out the light, rendering the room unavailable, except as a warehouse. The deterioration of the value of the property from these causes was estimated at 1,500*l*.—On Tuesday week, says an Edinburgh paper, "while a number of workmen were engaged on the line of railway, near New Learmouth, in erecting centres for the bridge across a deep glen, in a moment the whole of the huge framework gave way, burying beneath it five of the workmen, all of whom were very much injured. The unfortunate circumstance, according to report, is ascribed to carelessness, which we believe to be the cause of almost all the railway accidents so frequently occurring both in this and other neighbourhoods."

#### SALE OF THE REGENT-STREET QUADRANT COLUMNS.

At the sale on the 7th inst., the assembled company appeared to be composed of brokers and dealers chiefly; some of whom, with little respect for poor Nash, declared that the "very handsome columns" were excellently good for a workhouse, while others talked good-humouredly about chimney ornaments, or turning them into "Roman-Doric" drains, but no one seemed inclined to start in the competition for their possession. The auctioneer stated that the columns each cost thirty-five guineas,—and, beginning at ten, he gradually reduced the price to four guineas, at which bidding commenced. A few were sold to private individuals at 7*l*. 10*s*. each, but the remainder are on hand, and may doubtless be obtained by any who desire them. They weigh 35 cwt. 10*lbs*. each.

**IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERPENTINE.**—The *Lowest* suggests that the bottom of the Serpentine should be so filled up and covered with gravel and concrete as to shallow gradually from 12 feet in the middle, and thus the cleansing process be rendered merely a sweeping of the concrete floor or bed.

#### PRESCOS AND OTHER DECORATIONS IN ITALY.

At a meeting of the Decorative Art Society, held some time since, a paper by Mr. Edward Cooper was read, treating of the frescoes and mosaics inspected by him during a recent journey through Italy.

The introduction embraced a review of some researches in the history of art, as disproving the supposed invention of painting, and its revival by Cimabue, as claimed for him by Vasari and other writers. This was followed by comments upon the productions of certain Greek and Roman artists antecedent to the Christian era, and then those of mediæval artists down to works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The remarks had reference to those frescoes only which the writer had the opportunity of inspecting, and their tenour had been regulated simply by his first impressions, and noted at that time. A fresco called the "Nozze Aldobrandini," now in the Vatican, representing the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, in size about 6 feet long and 3 feet high, and found in the year 1606, in some ruins formerly belonging to the golden house of Nero, was described as particularly worthy of attention; a pure Greek feeling, it was remarked, pervades this work—a view supported by the elegance of the distribution and attitudes of the figures, and the perfect drawing and colouring throughout. The colours for the most part were said to be secondary, and of light tints, so as to bear a resemblance in character to a water-colour sketch. N. Poussin, who copied this work in oil, it was said lost much of the beauty and simplicity, by filling in the back ground with deep colours, whereas, in the fresco, the figures were painted upon the lime. The picture is in the Cornici Palace, at Rome. The decorative works from Pompeii, Herculaneum, the baths of Titus, and others preserved in the Vatican, were then alluded to, some as displaying considerable merit in their execution. They consist chiefly of small fanciful figures, which have been placed as centres to panels, &c., but it was added that the decorative paintings from Pompeii are mostly of but second rate ability. The mosaics by the Romans were adverted to, for the purpose of introducing a parallel whereby the state of the arts might be thus regarded. That found in the house of the Pagan, at Pompeii, which measures about 24 feet by 14 feet, exhibits a representation of the battle between Alexander the Great and Darius, King of Persia, and is composed of small irregular fragments of marble of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in size, the colouring being good, the drawing and foreshortening spirited, the horses full of fire, and establishing a proof of great artistic powers of expression at the commencement of the Christian era. The decline of Roman power and influence being accompanied by a decadence of art, as shown in the curious mosaics in the crypt of St. Peter's at Rome, it was contended that the arts were probably practised for the most part by Byzantine artists until the time of Cimabue. The frescoes of the Campo Santo were referred to as among the most interesting of any now to be found in Italy; the oldest having been executed towards the close of the thirteenth century, and the others at intervals during the two following centuries. These present in themselves a fair page of history, shewing the progress of the arts. Giotto Andrea, Orcagna, Taddeo Gaddi, and others have been employed upon some of them. It was remarked that the subjects are scriptural; the scenes, however, have been laid in Pisa, or its neighbourhood, and the costumes and personages are transcripts from those existing at the time the works were completed. In reflecting upon this period, which immediately preceded the productions of these great masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the writer said he felt more fully the difficulty of drawing the line between high and decorative art, and he remarked that if the paintings in the loggia of the Vatican, and numerous similar works, should be classed as decorative art, still, in these instances, the human figure will be found drawn in every possible attitude, with the greatest artistic ability, while the works of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel are claimed by others as belonging to high art. He was therefore inclined to consider all art that tends to the ornamentation of an edifice, as decorative art, whether produced by Michel-

angelo, Raffaele, Cellini, or any other great genius that could be mentioned. The works in the Sistine Chapel were then described. The building was commenced by Pope Sixtus the 4th, A.D. 1473; and Signorelli, Cosimo Roselli, Perugino, and Ghirlandajo each contributed to the decoration of the upper portion of the walls. In 1508, Michelangelo proceeded to decorate the enormous vaulted ceiling, 150 feet in length and 50 feet in breadth, with upwards of 200 figures, representing the fall and redemption of man: the details of the subjects were described at length. They were said to have been executed by Michelangelo in twenty months; and the last Judgment, subsequently finished, is an immense work, occupying the whole of the east end of the chapel. In these productions Michelangelo has displayed the most wonderful skill in drawing the human figure, and representing it under every variety of foreshortening and position.

The "Last Judgment" the writer however contended, is deficient in elegance, and somewhat feeble in sentiment, and he considered it to be chiefly remarkable for the great ability shown in depicting the human figure under every conceivable contortion.

Mr. Cooper then referred to, and described the frescoes in the camera of the Vatican, by Raffaele, as especially enchanting from the harmony of colour and composition which pervades them throughout. Raffaele was employed ten years in painting these, and a difference in quality between the first and last composition became evident on careful examination. The later work, it was stated, shews that he had then caught a little of the vigour of Michelangelo, such as is more particularly evinced in the fresco representing the "Fire in the Borgo." The frescoes in the loggia, or corridor, being next in point of time of execution, were next noticed. The subjects are scriptural, and generally known as Raffaele's bible. It was remarked that the arabesque and other ornamental portions were probably painted by pupils, each designing the compartment upon which he had been employed.

Many of them are very beautiful inventions, whilst others display a comparative paucity of design, thus supporting this view. The writer added that his preconceived opinion that Raffaele had derived much of this style of composition from seeing the Roman decorations of the baths of Titus was strengthened on inspection, and he felt that, amidst the vast variety of design and fancy, shown in the camera, and also in the loggia, there is a want of harmony in the general effect, and also of unity of purpose. He then referred to many incongruities in the choice of subject, and in the size of objects there brought together, and maintained that such peculiarities are less obvious in the works of the ancients, as well as that they are avoided, in a great measure, in subsequent works; by Raffaele's pupils. The terms Arabesque and Raffaelesque having been freely used in his remarks, he observed, that the former is misapplied, in as far as its strict meaning is concerned; for it would appear that the Arab, never had adopted this kind of decoration. The Italians term this style Grottesques from the place or subterraneous caves, in which the examples were found that led to its revival.

Reference was then made to palaces in Genoa, which are all more or less decorated with paintings within and without. The architecture being of a picturesque and florid Roman character, the details, and the manner in which they are treated, formed matter for description. One method alluded to as effective, and very durable, consisted in the etching or scratching away the upper surface of lime, and displaying beneath a line of a brown or darker colour than that on the surface. The entrance-halls, he said, have usually ceilings painted with historical subjects, and Raffaelesque enrichments, which are often continued through staircases and chief apartments. They date chiefly from about 1530, and were the works of Raffaele's pupils.

Perino del Vaga decorated the Dorian palace in an admirable manner, which was described at length, as conducing to a rich, glowing, and harmonious result, and displaying much excellent drawing and treatment. This palace is, however, now unfurnished and unoccupied.